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FM AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7684
INFO RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 4727
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 4462
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE 1653
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE 1646
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 1283
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0930
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 0552
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE 0600
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 0553
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0688
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE 0642
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUMICEA/USSOCOM INTEL OPS CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L PESHAWAR 000489

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2018

TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: FATA: SUICIDE ATTACK IN ORAKZAI AGENCY KILLS AT LEAST 61
TRIBAL LEADERS

REF: PESHAWAR 84

CLASSIFIED BY: Lynne Tracy, Principal Officer, Peshawar,
Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

Summary

1. (C) In the largest attack on a tribal jirga thus far, a suicide bomber killed at least 61 tribal elders October 10 in Orakzai Agency. Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) Governor Owais Ghani confirmed 61 deaths so far but expected the number to grow. The tribal leaders and as many as 2000 members of the Ali Khel tribe were discussing their next course of action against the local taliban when the attack occurred. Previously the most deadly attack on tribal elders was on March 2 when a suicide bomber killed at least 40 people and injured approximately 50 others at a peace jirga in Darra Adam Khel where tribal elders had agreed to take up arms against militants.

Largest Attack Thus Far

2. (C) In a meeting on October 13, NWFP Governor Ghani told PO that the October 10 violence in Orakzai Agency was the largest attack on a tribal jirga in collective memory (other topics reported septel). A suicide bomber killed at least 61 tribal elders, and the casualty count was expected to go up with reports of substantial numbers of seriously wounded succumbing to their injuries (many reportedly from lack of nearby medical facilities). The government intended, Ghani said, to pay compensation. Press reports of an exodus from Orakzai due to the attack may be overblown as post contacts in the area have not reported population movement in any significant numbers. Some families from tribes not present at the jirga have moved in possible anticipation of future GOP operations.

3. (C) Tribesmen were holding a jirga in Orakzai Agency to discuss the next actions to be taken by the Ali Khel lashkar (tribal militia) against militants in the area, when an explosive laden pick-up truck rammed into the gathering and exploded. Press reporting indicates that as many as 2000 tribesmen were present at the time of the blast.

Why Attack These Elders?

¶4. (C) According to Ghani, the Ali Khel tribal lashkar was responsible for recent actions against the local taliban and that this was the likely motive for the attack. Previously the most deadly attack on tribal elders was on March 2 when a suicide bomber killed at least 40 people and injured approximately 50 others at a peace jirga in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas' (FATA) Darra Adam Khel region. Many of those killed in this earlier explosion were also tribal elders who had agreed to take up arms against militants (reftel).

Comment

¶5. (C) While this attack will likely complicate the tribal action against the local taliban in Orakzai agency in the short term, it may simply add to the growing anti-taliban sentiments of many citizens of the NWFP. There are already reports of retaliation (destroying houses) in Orakzai, targeting local taliban.

TRACY